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WHEN

By

ELIZABETH BREWSTER

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WHEN AND OTHER POEMS

WHEN

AND OTHER POEMS

ELIZABETH BREWSTER

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RICHARD G. BADGER
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WHEN?

The Spring comes softly, up among the hills,
The patient earth lies waiting 'neath the snow;
Then comes a stir, the pulse of new life thrills,
The snow wreaths fade, warmly the south winds blow,
And at their kiss the swamps flush rosy red;
O'er all the trees, upon the hillside steep,
A tender mist of living green is spread,
While in the hollows tiny violets peep.
And, with a note as sweet as water's fall,
A blue bird tells of coming joy and light;
Gayly the robins to each other call,
And over all, the sun shines warm and bright.
And then, we start, and cry, "Winter has flown"!
But when the Spring came back, is still to us unknown.

A NOVEMBER MESSAGE

All day long, o'er field and mountain, dull gray
clouds came drifting, drifting,
And the dead leaves floated downward, through the
still air, soft and slow,
All the earth lay silent, waiting, in the hush of win-
ter's coming,
And the very winds were quiet, too subdued and sad
to blow.

Suddenly a blue-bird's whistle breaks the dreary,
hopeless silence,
And its throbbing, joyous music bears this message
through the air,
"He who gives the birds their portion, has the whole
earth in his keeping,
After cold, and storm, and struggle, He will send
the springtime fair."

So, dear heart, though thou art waiting, in the chill
of pain's dark winter,
And the dead leaves of thy hopes come floating
downward, thick and fast.
Yet thy Father's love surrounds thee, and His hand
will surely send thee
The sweet spring of joy and blessing, when thy time
of storm is past.

MIZPAH

To one, most dear to me,
Towards whom, I stretch out loving eager hands.
Thou soon wilt toss upon the restless sea,
While I wait here, alone, upon the sands.
Tempests may sweep across the heaving deep,
Thick mists across my lonely path may creep.
May He, who governs both the sea, and land,
Still guide our paths by His all-loving hand.
God watch 'twixt thee and me,
God shelter thee,
At sea.

SECURITY

I saw a tiny bird, the other day,
Flitting from bough to bough, on joyous wing.
For Oh, the sun was bright, and earth was gay,
And so it seemed he could not choose but sing;
While all his little heart, in sheer delight,
He caroled forth in music sweet and true.
"Alas"! I thought, "How soon comes darkling night,
And then, what can this helpless creature do?"
When, looking through the branches towards the sky,
I saw his nest, builded secure and high.
And wouldst thou live in sunshine, free from fear?
Then thou must build in Heaven thy home and nest.
Below, are pain, and doubt, and shadows drear,
But there, are light, and strength, and perfect rest.

THE FIRST ROBIN

All day the heavy clouds hung dark and low,
Sullenly brooding over field and hill;
And ever and anon a flake of snow
Came drifting slowly downward cold and still.
Slowly the daylight faded from the sight,
When suddenly the dull clouds in the west
Parted, and through the rift a sunbeam bright
Shot, gladdening all things with its radiance blest.
And straightway through the still air loud and clear,
Roused by the brightness, rang a robin's song.
Gone is the pall of stillness dense and drear,
Broken the yoke of death and darkness strong.
Rouse thee, O Earth, and turn thee to the light;
Conquered is winter's reign, and ended is thy night.

SUNSET

The hush of Autumn rests upon the hills,
Dreamy and warm the mellow sunbeams lie;
A golden vapor every valley fills,
And soft white clouds drift through the deep blue sky.
Gay glowing maples all the woods adorn;
While crimson leaves strew every quiet path.
In the brown fields stand shocks of rustling corn,
And in their shelter golden pumpkins laugh.

Now long deep shadows cross the meadow fair,
And the great sun drops down behind the hill.
A hint of coming frost is in the air,
And all the whispering winds are hushed and still.
The evening star burns in the glowing west,
And all the world is wrapped in quiet rest.

ALMEDA

Softly the rosy dawn, with gentle hand,
Open, the golden gate of morn doth swing,
And far and wide her flashing sunbeams fling,
As on the shining threshold she doth stand.
As at her glad approach, o'er sky and land,
A flush of pleasure spreads; birds wake and sing,
Rousing sweet echoes with their caroling,
And flower bells ring, by gentle breezes fanned.
Even so, my love, when thou dost come to me,
I blush, to feel my own unworthiness,
Yet blush again, with pleasure, when I see
Thou hast such power, to gladden, and to bless.
For thy sweet presence, like to sunshine fair,
Bringeth bright flowers of joy, and music everywhere.

Some one has said "Sweet things are born to die".
We trust that sweetest things shall last alway.
See how these leaves, though brown and dried they
lie,
Still hold the perfume of a summer's day.

A CHRISTMAS OFFERING

"Glory to God", the angels sing,
Sweetly the lingering praises ring
Throughout the echoing sky.
And shall not we, more blest than they,
With angel choirs, our tribute pay
Unto our God, most high?

Unmarred by sin, the angels' songs;
To us, a sadder note belongs,
Deepened with pain and strife:
Yet, through earth's mirror, faint and dim,
We too, would offer praise to Him
Who died to bring us life.

Earth's gifts belong to Thee alone.
We have no treasure of our own
To lay before Thy shrine.
But, of our poverty, we bring
Our wills, a Christmas offering,
Take them, and make them Thine.

MY SHIP

"When my ship comes in" I said, and smiled,
As I looked far out o'er the sunny sea,
For all my dreams since a little child,
And all my hopes and visions wild,
Were meant by those few short words to me.

And surely, there never sailed away
A fairer craft, from the harbor old.
The waves round her prow seemed to dance and play,
And the tender light of the rising day
Made her white sails fairer than burnished gold.

The beautiful ship, in the harbor old!
Well might the sun on her white sails shine.
She will come back laden with riches and gold,
With hopes fulfilled, and with wealth untold,
And this treasure is all for me, and mine.

My ship! My ship! But tempests rise,
And the dancing waves can dash and roar,
And storm-clouds cover the angry skies,
While we sweep the broad ocean with straining eyes,
But what can we do, who wait on the shore?

Yet my ship came in, came in at last,
Drifting back from the cruel, cruel sea,
With upturned hull, and broken mast,
And my dreams and visions all are past;
For 'twas only a wreck, came back to me.

THE SONG OF THE GLEN BROOK

I

From forest depths of moss and fern I trickle,
And softly creep
Beneath great rocks and overhanging branches,
In shadow deep.
And fringing blossoms tremble at my coming,
With sudden joy,
Stooping to greet me, then in haste withdrawing,
Timid and coy.
And over pebbly beds I dance and ripple,
While, high above,
Among the boughs, the tiny wood-birds carol
Of home, and love,
And summer days of full and ripe completeness,
Whose coming seems
To bring us promise of the glad fulfillment
Of all our dreams.
On, on, I dance, through flickering shade and sunshine
Now dark, now bright,
And fairy dragon-flies skim swiftly o'er me,
With wings of light,
And bright-eyed squirrels stoop to drink my waters,
Merry and fleet,
And all the glad wood-creatures seem to echo.
O, life is sweet.
In the glad summer days of joy and sunshine,
O, life is sweet,
Is sweet.

II

Then deeper grows my path, and all about me
Great rocks are strewn.
While through the trees strange winds come down the mountain,
With fitful moan.
And here, beneath the sheltering birch and chestnuts,
The young folks meet,
Scaling the slippery rocks, and narrow ledges,
With eager feet.
And merry laughter breaks the woodland stillness,
While shout and song
Echo among the deep paths of the forest,
Silent so long.
And here, beneath the softly whispering branches.
Shy lovers meet,
To find together perfect understanding,
Tender and sweet.
In the glad summer days of joy and sunshine,
O, love is sweet,
Is sweet.

III

And now dark hemlock tress close round my pathway
While, grim and wild,
Like broken fragments of the earth's foundations,
Great rocks are piled.
And swifter now, I hasten on, and downward,
Nor can I stay.
The mighty water-spirit, strong, resistless,
Calls me away.
Now swift and white, my seething, boiling waters
Sweep past the shore.

And louder, louder, comes the awful summons,
With sullen roar.
And all the timid wood-flowers on my margin
Are dashed with spray.
And all the shadowy air about me trembles.
Away! Away!
Now seething, dashing, boiling, leaping, struggling,
A sudden spring,
And, down the sheer cliff's side, with fierce abandon,
My life I fling.
Foam, spray, wild echoes, deep reverberations,
A mighty rush.
And then, above the black, mysterious waters,
An awful hush.
Sullen, despairing silence, dismal darkness,
And is this meet?
In the still depths, away from joy and sunshine,
Can life be sweet,
Be sweet?

IV

Beyond the depths, stretch broad and fertile meadows.
While, shining low,
The setting sun lights up my quiet waters,
With rosy glow.
And, through the fields, the children hasten homeward,
In happy throng.
While one late robin scatters through the stillness
His evensong.
Now, in the west, the evening star gleams softly,
Steady and bright,
Symbol of glad new hope, the gift of Heaven,
To cheer our night.

Silence and peace brood o'er the darkening meadows
Full and complete.
And, after night, we trust the morning cometh.
And trust is sweet.
After the passion and the sullen sorrow,
New hope, God-given hope
Is sweet,
Is sweet.

THROUGH STORM

O, my heart, my heart was heavy,
With the hoping and the waiting,
As the great sun settled slowly
Down into the troubled sea.
And long trails of mist came crowding
O'er the weary waste of waters,
And the brooding night sank darkly,
With no light of hope for me.

Then, far out amidst the darkness,
Gleamed the white foam, rising, falling.
And the tide came sweeping landward,
With a dull, increasing roar.
And the tide of my deep sorrow
Rose, and tossed me in its billows,
As, with restless force, the breakers
Toss the sea-weed on the shore.

Suddenly, the sweeping tempest
Broke, with wild, resistless fury.
Blackly yawned the awful billows
In the sudden lightning's glare.
Blacker still, again the darkness
Closed upon the fearful conflict,
And the winds rushed madly onward,
With the frenzy of despair.

But the dreadful night is over,
With its fierce, unearthly battles,
And the morning sunlight dances
On the shining, quiet sea.
Joyously the birds are singing,
And a solemn peace enfolds me.
For I know, through storm and tempest,
God will care for you and me.

MILK-WEED

Come with me, dear, for the shadows are falling,
Night glides o'er the mountain, stately and slow,
Through the dew-laden meadows, the crickets are calling,
And high mid the tree-tops, the soft night-winds blow.
Come with me, dear.

The last gleams of day, in the west, now, are dying,
And, in the deep sky, the golden stars glow.
One lingering bird to its warm nest is flying,
And the hum of the night-moth sounds dreamy and low.
Come with me, dear.

I think that the yellow-haired daisies are dreaming,
For I see their bright heads softly nod, to and fro.
But the milk-weed still wakes, for its pale stars are gleaming,
As if with some thought more than mortals can know.
Come with me, dear.

Then come with me, dear, that just we two, together,
May live over those bright days, now long, long ago,
When we strayed, hand in hand, in the sweet summer weather,
Out over the hill, in the sunset's red glow.
Come with me, dear.

Ah, dear, the summer has vanished forever.
Through the cold, leafless branches, the wind whistles shrill.

To the old nests, the robins will come again, never.
The meadows are barren, the air dim and chill.

But, though daisies are gone, and black clouds are flying,
The milk-weed now sends you its message of cheer,
"The flower dies for the seed, joy comes, after sighing,
And, after death's night, Heaven's morning shines, clear."
And our home is there, dear.

THE BIRTHDAY OF A KING

The birthday of a King. O, wondrous sight!
The King of kings to earth has now descended.
Lo, in a manger lies the Lord of light.
Behold, what majesty and meekness blended.

Ah, see this lowly stable, cold and bare.
See, on the straw, this helpless infant sleeping.
And then behold the nights, the days of care,
The coming years for this young child are keeping.

Behold Him, poor, that we might riches find,
A man of grief, that He might bring us gladness;
Partaking of the nature of mankind,
Bearing our sickness, sharing all our sadness.

Behold, O wondrous love—O, matchless grace—
Behold, He gives His life, for man's salvation.
He bears sin's punishment, in sinners' place,
That we might live to God, His new creation.

The birthday of a King. Kneel and adore,
With reverent feet, approach this stable lowly,
Come, seek the infant King, crowned evermore
Thy King, thy Righteousness, thy Saviour holy.

LET THY PEACE RULE

Let Thy peace rule.
  Weary with fruitless struggle,
Broken, defeated in the strife with wrong,
Restless, dissatisfied, in darkness groping.
With will still unsubdued, and passions strong,
To Thee, within whose presence tempests cease,
  I come for peace.

Let Thy peace rule.
  Amidst vague shadows struggling,
Bewildered with the mystery of life,
Fearful and tempted, stumbling oft, and falling,
Knowing myself unequal to the strife,
I come to Thee, who strength and pity art.
  Rule Thou my heart.

Let Thy peace rule.
  Quiet this restless turmoil,
And let a solemn hush my spirit fill.
That, in the stillness, I may hear Thee speaking,
And, listening, learn to know and love Thy will.
O, Prince of peace, enter, and claim Thine own.
  Rule me, alone.

BEFORE THE SPRINGTIME

And so you are weary to-day, dear heart,
  And you think the world gone awry,
And it seems that the sun will never shine,
  Nor the clouds ever roll from the sky?

You think that the spring will never come back,
  That the birds will never sing,
That sorrow must always be your lot,
  Your life be a useless thing?

I walked o'er the hills to-day, dear heart,
  And the trees stood gaunt and bare,
But down on the ground 'mid the withered leaves
  I found one violet fair.

I saw on the boughs many empty nests,
  Yet—clear, and sweet, and strong
Filled with new life, and hope, and trust,
  I heard a blue-bird's song.

God sends spring back to the earth, dear heart,
  Shall we cling to the winter sad?
He would fill our lives with such beautiful things,
  Let us take them, and be glad.

I know the longing and pain, dear heart,
  And yet, I think, ere long,
If we trust our Heavenly Father's love,
  Our grief shall be turned to a song.

Hope on through the winter of sorrow and trial,
  Take courage, the clouds will break;
God will send us joy, in his own good time,
  For he knoweth the way that we take.

GREETING

I know not what the year may hold
Of joy or pain,
If you will walk 'neath sunny skies,
Or through the rain;
But this I ask, that He may walk
Near, as your Guide,
Who came for us, a little child
At Christmas tide.
And ever may His love and peace
With you abide.

NIGHT FALL

The drifting east winds sweep the meadows wide,
Sending long shivering ripples through the grass,
Tossing the maple boughs from side to side,
And scattering showers of dead leaves as they pass.
A clambering vine, loosed from its former stay,
Sways helplessly, at each recurring blast,
While one fair rose, the pride of yesterday,
Now drops its crimson petals thick and fast.
The driving mists blot out the distant hill,
And shadows gather thickly on the plain,
Night closes round us, dreary, dark and chill.
Then draw the curtain, Love, shut out the rain,
And sit beside me in the fire's red light,
Thyself our home's true sunshine warm and bright.

A SONG

My lady fair, awake,
The rosy fingered morning
Opens her eastern gate,
And flashing sunbeams o'er the earth doth fling.
The dewy meadows sparkle in the light,
The fragile wind-flowers ope their blossoms white,
And everywhere sweet birds are caroling.
My love, my lady, wake.
Awake.
Awake.

My lady fair, good night.
Above the purple mountains
The moon is rising bright,
And faint, sweet breath of lilies fills the air.
Soft night winds blow thy dreamy lullaby,
While steadfastly, from out the quiet sky,
The stars are watching thee with loving care.
Good night, my love,
Good night.
Good night.

NASTURTIUMS

Summer is past, the Spring's fair flowers are dead,
The garden paths are desolate and bare,
The rose is gone, the merry birds are fled,
And dried leaves flutter through the chilly air.
Yet down beneath this gray wall's sheltering care
A sudden blaze of color meets the eye,
The brave nasturtium blossoms bright and fair,
Here tell of summer 'neath October's sky.
Dear gallant flowers, what though the winter drear
Soon will destroy you with its freezing blast?
While life remains you still will tell of cheer,
And bravely show your colors to the last.
And when the winter's snows heap vale and hill,
True hearts will keep your courage living still.

A CHRISTMAS SONG

The stars are all out in the still arch of heaven,
And the bright silver moon like a ship on the sea,
Drops down to her moorings behind the blue mountain,
But my heart is awake, Love, and thinking of thee.

The snow-covered hills glitter white in the moonlight,
And the frost crystals sparkle on bramble and tree;
The shadows lie black on the ice-covered river,
And my heart, Love, is waking and thinking of thee.

All the earth lies at rest in a wonderful quiet,
As if this glad night, noise and turmoil must flee;
"Peace, good will, now must reign," all nature seems telling;
And in this sweet hush, Love, my heart turns to thee.

Shine bright, wondrous stars, and make music in heaven,
Float on, silver moon, o'er thy unruffled sea;
May the peace and the joy of this glad time enwrap thee,
Is the prayer which my heart makes to-night, Love, for thee.

A Noonday Dream

In the days of song and story,
When the world enjoyed its morning,
And men thought as little children,
To the earth a gift was given;
'Twas a strangely-woven carpet.
Only those with thought untainted,
Those with courage never shaken,
Those whose truth had never wavered,
Could behold its soft, dim colors,
Could enjoy its power supernal.
For, to whom this carpet floated,
Like a cloud dropped from the heavens,
Came the power to drift off with it,
To whatever clime his fancy,
Or his heart, or longing, drew him.

But the world grew old and dusty.
And men's thoughts and truth were tarnished,
And their courage grew bravado.
So the mystic wishing-carpet
Was drawn back again to cloudland,
Till the day, (if that day cometh),
When, renewed in truth and courage,
Men again are little children.

Yet, although the magic carpet
Has departed from our dwellings,
Still its shadow lingers near us;
And some call this shadow, Fancy.
But a few, with keener instinct,
Say, "It is Hope's mantle passing."

Not alone to men of courage,
Nay, nor even to the spotless,
Comes this symbol of past glory,
Comes this promise of the future.
As the substance came to virtue,
So the shadow, virtue wanting,
Comes to those who strive for virtue,
Or to those who, weary-hearted,
Need some cheer to help them upward,
O'er life's hot and dusty highway.

Such an one, footsore and weary,
Toiled I, through the burning noonday.
When, behold, a little arbor,
And, within it, swaying softly,
An illusive, mystic shadow.

Eagerly, I sought the arbor,
Sank to rest, beneath this shadow.
From the azure vault of heaven,
Blazed the August sun, in fury.
All the sky was hot and fiery,
All the shimmering air was burning,
All the earth was scorched and gasping,
Every leaf hung parched and wilted,
E'en the little birds were silent,
In a heat too great for singing.
From the still depths of my refuge,
Gazed I on a world of summer.

Then to me there came a marvel.
All my hill-begirdled landscape
Changed to a low, flat-spread country.
Here, among its fertile meadows,
Stood a gray and curious windmill,
With broad sails slow, slowly turning.
Here, again, a red-roofed cottage.

High among whose clustering chimneys,
A long-legged stork had nested.
Green and pleasant was this landscape,
Rich with deep and fertile meadows,
Gay with brightly-blooming gardens,
Trim and tidy, telling always
Of a people, labor-loving.
Soft and damp, the summer breezes
Blew across this pleasant country.
And, upon them, faint, illusive,
Like a strain of fitful music,
Came the deep voice of the ocean,
For this land is sea-begirdled.
Eagerly I scanned the distant
Line, where sky and earth commingled,
Till I saw a misty shadow,
The gray line of the wide ocean.

Suddenly, without my effort,
Stood I, close beside the water.
Gray the sky above me brooded.
Gray the waters, tossed and troubled,
Rose and fell, with ceaseless moaning.
Sorrow seemed upon the ocean.

Then again, a changing picture.
Blue, the azure dome of heaven.
Blue, the gayly-dancing water,
While the breakers, combing, curling,
Ran and frolicked o'er the shingle,
And the spray, now white and snowy,
Radiant, now, with rainbow colors,
Touched my face with soft caresses;
And the keen, salt breath of ocean
Seemed to give new life and vigor.

But is this the breath of ocean?
No, the scent of roses greets me.
I am in a sweet old garden,
I am in my own dear country.
And that garden, O, that garden!
Here, its paths are box-bebordered,
Here, are hemmed with currant bushes,
Here, with fragrant berry-brambles.
How its shining cornstalks rustle,
How its fruits grow rich and mellow,
And its lovely flowers run riot.
Johnny-jump-ups crowd the cornstalks,
Pansies grow among the bean-poles,
Dahlias climb the wide grape-arbors,
Sweet-peas, butterfles of plant-land,
Twist among the great tomatoes.
And the roses, white and crimson,
Pink and yellow, reign triumphant.

Up and down this sunny garden,
Strays a little maiden, singing.
Now she fills her hands with blossoms,
Mignonette, and pinks, and asters.
Now, a bed of fragrant wild thyme
Makes her pause to look and wonder
Why the bees, there, honey sipping,
Are so very, very tiny,
While, among the bright phlox, yonder,
Giant bees prepare for winter.
Now she seeks the old grape-arbor,
Where, all warm with autumn sunshine,
The first purple grapes are turning.
Now, a tiny breeze, upspringing
Whispers to the little maiden,
"Look down, underneath the pear-tree.
I was playing there, this morning."

And the little feet run lightly
Out across the garden meadow,
And the bright eyes spy, triumphant,
On the ground, her proper booty,
The great pears, full ripe and mellow.

O, that dearest of all gardens!
O, thrice happy little maiden!
For not lonely in her straying.
In the garden, busy, toiling,
There is one, to her its center,
There is one, her life's bright sunshine.
Now, to him she comes, with question,
"May I have the pears the wind dropped!"
"May I pick the red rose, yonder?"
Or she comes with happy wonder
At some miracle of nature.
"See,—a violet in the autumn."
Or a clover-leaf, four-petalled.
O, thrice happy little maiden!
She is always sure of welcome,
Sure of sympathy untiring,
Sure of interest in each beauty,
Fresh and eager, joyous, always.

For the one who makes her sunshine
Has, in age, the heart of childhood,
Has a love, deep, strong, and tender,
Learned, not from earth's changeful teaching,
But from Him who love created.

O, thrice happy little maiden!
Pain must surely one day find thee,
Shadows gather round thy pathway,
Yet no darkest cloud can rob thee
Of these early days of sunshine.

Empty stands the sweet old garden.
All the dew-filled air is fragrant,
But the blossoms, once so brilliant,
Now gleam dimly in the twilight.
Silent stands the sweet old garden,
Save where some shrill-voiced cricket,
Or a katy-did makes outcry,
"Summer days are past and over."
All the air is still to listen
For the frost's near step, approaching.

Dark and empty is the garden.
But, although the sun has vanished,
All the west still throbs and pulses
With a flood of golden glory,
As if, to some better country,
Where night's shadows never gather,
A great door had been flung open.

Wonderful, that path of splendor!
Wistfully I gaze into it,
Till I almost see, before me,
That fair land, whose happy inmate
Knows no change, nor pain, nor sorrow,
Needs no sun nor moon to light him.
And I know that one beloved,
Who was here our hearts' best sunshine,
Walks within that happy country,
As a son, at home forever,
Joying in his Father's presence.
What new beauty is upon him,
What new power or grace, I know not.
Only this;—his eyes are feasted
On the King in all His beauty,
And so gazing, so adoring,
He shall grow to be most like Him.

Still I gaze into the sunset
Till I almost think there greets me
A faint strain of sweetest music,
From that happy, holy country.

Nay, my ears are dull of hearing,
And my eyes, earth-dimmed and darkened,
Cannot bear the heavenly glory.
So the door to that fair country
Softly closes, as I linger.

Fitfully the night-wind passes,
And the darkness closes round me.
But, upon the night's still darkness,
Break the stars, heaven-lighted tapers.

Then I hear a voice, low-calling,
"Come to me, and follow closely.
I have trod this way before thee.
And the path to this fair country
Lies right onward, up the highway.
Follow me. It is not, surely,
That thy feet shall never stumble;
But my feet have walked, unerring.
'Tis not that thou shalt accomplish
Wondrous progress, on this journey;
But I took this journey for thee.
It is not that thou can'st conquer
All the evils that may meet thee;
But I conquered evil for thee.
"It is not that thou art holy,
Fit to enter in that country;
But my holiness is perfect.

Pain must surely be thy portion,
Weariness and tribulation

Cannot always pass thy dwelling.
Toil and heat and dust await thee,
Yea, and last, a cold, dark river.
But I passed this way before thee,
Knew the toil, the heat, the sorrow,
Yea,—and since none else could do it,
I, the Shepherd, true and loving,
Tasted death for all my people,
Died to pay their debt,—sin's wages.
Rose, that they might live forever.
Come to me, and follow, closely."

Hush, O heart of mine, and listen!

Lo, a change! Still I am seated
In my shadow-haunted arbor.
Fiercely glows the August sunshine.
All the shimmering air is burning.
All the earth is hot and dusty.

But, enough, I must press onward
Up the highway,—up, so be it.
This is not my place of resting;
I, a pilgrim, may but tarry
For a night, in this, my shelter.
Up, my soul, and hasten onward!
But, through all the dust of travel,
Through the shadow, or the sunshine,
Listen, still, forever listen
For that voice of wondrous sweetness,
Of authority, unchanging,
"I have trod this way before thee.
In my footsteps follow, trusting."

ISABELLE

Her eyes are like the deep blue of the sea,
When the swift tide sweeps in from far away,
And all the flashing white-caps dance and play,
Tossed by the strong, pure sea-winds wild and free.

Her hair has caught the morning's first pale gold,
Before the blaze of sunrise fills the sky,
While dew drops glitter on the uplands high,
And, down below, the shadows linger, cold.

And, when you meet with her, you feel, once more,
The call of childhood's pleasures, far away,
You catch the spicy scent of mint and bay,
And sea-weeds drying on the rocky shore.

You see a woman, generous and sincere,
Steadfast in purpose, earnest for the right,
Tender and strong and true, cheery and bright,
Forgetting self, for those she holds most dear.

O, friend, whose friendship strengthens my frail life,
May God, our Father, bless you from above,
Grant you your heart's desire, give you His love,
And guide you safely through life's care and strife.
My Isabelle.

A NIGHT SONG

Night closes slowly round the solemn hills,
Quenching the crimson glory of the west.
A tremulous twilight every valley fills,
And the last bird-song dies away to rest.

High in the deepening sky with steady sweep
The burning stars in stately splendor pass,
While down among the leaves the fire-flies peep,
And wave their fairy lanterns through the grass.

The whispering winds move softly to and fro,
Telling strange secrets to the listening trees;
Mysterious shadows swiftly come and go,
And vague sweet music floats upon the breeze.

Do life's mysteries perplex thee?
Do its doubts and questions vex thee?
Is thy pathway dark and dreary?
Has thy heart grown faint and weary?
Yet rest.
God leadeth best; rest, rest.

When the shades of night would hide thee,
God sends out his stars to guide thee,
When no single ray can cheer thee
Then the Lord, Himself, draws near thee,
Therefore rest.
God leadeth best; rest, rest.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Merrily, merrily falls the snow,
Dancing down, from the cold gray sky.
Can it be that the fairy people white
Are coming down to the earth to-night,
To bid the year "Good-bye"?
Merrily, merrily falls the snow.

Softly, softly falls the snow,
And darkness creeps over earth and sky.
The wind o'er the hilltops sighs sad and low,
And amidst the darkness and deepening snow,
The year doth die.
Softly, softly falls the snow.

Solemn and still o'er the glistening snow,
The sun is rising clear and bright.
With storm and darkness the year hath gone.
May the untried year, now at its dawn,
Be pure and white, as new fallen snow.

THE SHADOW OF A DREAM

Lost, lost, a shadow, 'twixt the dark and day!
O ye, who hurry by on eager feet,
Saw you a vision wonderful and sweet
Flitting before you? Tell me, tell me pray.

Only a shadow? That I cannot say;
The shadow of a dream, a vision bright,
An airy castle gleaming in hope's light,
An unreality, more real than day.

And, through this dim strange radiance, soft and still,
Moved stately forms, on loving service bent,
With eyes keen-seeing, wise true hearts intent,
Hands strong to minister to human ill.

Lost, lost, a shadow! Gone the phantom light,
Hope's airy towers are blotted from the sky.
Perhaps there was no vision, only I,
Myself a shadow, wander through the night.

Yet men have said, there is a region high
Where all the shattered dreams, lost to us here,
Find their true prototypes, substantial, clear,
A land of glad realities, that cannot die.

And in that land dwells One, whose pitying love
Once brought Him down, to walk our shadowy way,
To win for us a pathway to the day,
And guide our feet to that sure land above.

Lost, lost, a shadow! Lord of that bright land,
Look down upon us struggling in the night,
Help us, in darkness, to believe in light,
And bring us home at last, led by thy hand
Beyond all shadow.

IN DARKNESS

Traveler, haste, the day is flying,
In the glimmering west, low-lying,
The last streaks of red are dying.

Swiftly scuds the storm-rack dreary,
While, amid its billows eerie,
The pale moon gleams wan and weary.

Traveler, haste, thy strength is failing,
Louder now the winds come wailing,
Nearer yet the clouds are trailing.
* * * * * * * *
Up the East the dawn is creeping,
Back the heavy mists are sweeping,
What dread secrets are they keeping?

Deep, O traveler, is thy sleeping,
Sleep, but not on earth thy waking.

And one woman's heart is breaking.

CLASS DAY

For one more class, the parting time had come.
The four bright, busy, merry college years,
So long, when planned for, but so short, when past,
Have come, and gone. The men, who, four years since,
As boys, and strangers saw each other first,
Now say, "Farewell", firm friends and serious men.
But ere the parting, came one day of pause,
When each sought to forget life's graver side,
And, living o'er again old pranks and scrapes,
In fun, and joke, to be a boy again.

And with these boys their many friends collect.
Grave gray-haired men were there, with thoughtful eyes
Watching those boyish men, or manly boys,
Each hoping that his boy, in future years,
Might make the world a better, braver place,
And finish out that which his own life lacked.
Mothers were there, thinking, with mother's pride,
"I'm sure not one is equal to my son.
Some may be handsomer—perhaps—but none so good".

And many younger brothers, too, were there,
By some unspoken law, gathered in knots,
To roar at each uncomprehended joke,
And then to whisper, in triumphant tones,
"If we can't beat that, in a year or two"!
And maidens bloomed that day like sweet June flowers,
In fluttering robes of pink, and blue, and white,
And dainty bonnets, and illusive hats,
Till, by comparison, gardens seemed wastes,
And pinks, and fragrant roses, merely weeds,

While they themselves, in sweet unconsciousness
Ne'er thought upon their garments, but instead,
Each mused,—but stay, who so presumptuous
To dare break in upon a maiden's dream?

So fans and ribbons waved, and jokes were cracked,
And music gave its magic to the time.
And radiant June sent forth her warmest air,
And brightest sunshine, for the festival.
And on the campus, every blade of grass
Laughed in the light, while the great tulip-trees,
With generous hand, scattered their orange bloom.
And, through the stately elms, the rustling breeze
Passed, with mysterious whispers, up and down.
The air was full of rare perfume and light,
The very birds, singing in sweeter tones,
While, high against the deep blue of the sky,
Rose up the ivied walls of Old Nassau.
And, ever and anon, from the gray tower,
Deep and distinct, the bell gave out the hour.

Suddenly, high above the people's heads,
Down from the clear blue sky, on golden wing,
A butterfly drifts softly, turns and floats
Backward and forward in the brilliant light,
Then poises lightly, high above the crowd.
And, as they watch the stranger, low, yet clear,
Like long-forgotten music, comes a voice.

"Partings must be, for all things have their time,
And change, and death, shall be the law of life,
Till this life end in changeless life above.
But, lest mankind, weighed down by thought of death,
Should miss, through dull despair, his life's best aim.
Or else should say, with foolish hardihood,
'Life is so short it recks not how 'tis spent,

Since e'en fame's shining laurels fade and die,'
And so should waste this priceless gift, his life,
Lest this should be, Hope has been sent to man
To cheer, and comfort him, and nerve his hand
For noble work, and chivalrous emprise.
And hand in hand with Hope, more strong than she,
Faith has been sent, a sure and changeless link
To join man's little weakness with God's strength.

And so, to-day, as these new-armèd knights
Go forth, into the battlefield of life,
I, golden winged Hope, float softly down,
To spur and guide each champion on his way,
Nor is Faith distant, though you see her not;
And he must win, who fights with Faith and Hope".

So spake the voice, then ceasing all was still,
Save for a dreamy rustle of the elms,
And the soft whisper of the summer wind.
The golden sun sank lower in the west,
And cool, deep shadows lay across the grass.
The dews began to fall, and, at their touch,
The scent of roses filled the warm June air.
The arching sky grew high and wonderful.
Then deep and clear through the still evening air
The bell from Old Nassau gave out the hour.

THE HANGING OF THE CURTAINS

Not long since, if I remember,
In a quaint and quiet village,
Dwelt a good and reverend parson,
One who spent his life in service,
Toiled and labored for his people,
Yet had small remuneration
For his love and his devotion,
Save the great reward that's promised
In the future to the faithful.
Such an one was he as Peter,
Fighting lust and sin's corruption;
One like St. John, the beloved,
Working for his "little children".
One like Paul, the "chief apostle",
Fighting the good fight victorious.
Yet, unlike the great apostle,
He had chosen him a helpmeet
For the "present dispensation",
One whose loving help and service
Lighted much his heavy labors.
One like unto Ruth, the faithful,
Or like Mary, grave and lowly,
Whose adornment, a meek spirit,
Showed the good part she had chosen.
So they lived and helped each other,
And instructed their three children.
First among their olive branches
Came a daughter, staid and sober,
And a very Dorcas was she,
Darning stockings, making garments,
Always working for her family,
Or increasing her own learning.
Next they had another daughter,
Not a Dorcas, but a Martha.

One who did less than her sister
Yet worked harder to reach after
What she grasped not.
Last of all unto the parson
A young son and heir was given,
A young Lemuel, who from childhood
Heard the words his mother taught him,
Or like him whose mother Eunice,
Aided by her sainted mother,
Taught her son the truest knowledge.
So his very earliest learning
Was the truth his mother taught him.
Thus the parson and his family
Dwelt in that old country village.
Peaceful was the quiet parsonage
With its great green yard around it.
On the west the ground sloped gently
To a thick high hedge of lilacs.
On the east the church and chapel
Stood inviting all to enter.
On the north great firs and pine trees
Stood, the guardians of the parsonage
From the furious storms of winter,
While tall maples in among them
Were unto this quiet homestead
For a beauty and adornment.
Theirs the first pale green of Springtime,
And the rich dark hue of Summer;
And when the first frosts of Autumn
Touched their waiting leaves, they scattered
Floods of gold and crimson glory,
To enrich all who came near them.
Southward from the happy parsonage
Stretched a meadow and a garden.
In the meadow early daisies
Came to gladden first the summer,
And then, later and more gladsome,

Like condensed and bottled sunshine,
Golden rod the joyous nodded;
And grave asters, wistful, tender,
Waved, "Bid farewell unto Summer,
But hope on, through the long winter,
For another summer coming".
And the garden, O! that garden,
With its hyacinths and tulips,
And its violets and pansies,
And its dear old pinks that take you
To the first days of your childhood.
While all kinds and sorts of roses
Make you almost dance with gladness
To know that there is such beauty.
And inside the peaceful parsonage
First the bright and cheery kitchen
Stand before us. Let us enter—.
Two east windows let in sunshine,
Seven doors let in the children.
It might not be quite convenient,
But no one would dare to whisper
Such a thing above a whisper.
Next the dining-room, small, narrow,
Yet "A good room", each one called it.
Then the study, O, that study!
Here the parson wrote his sermons,
Here the children, when their parents
Went to make their pastoral visits,
Worked and read and played together,
But most cosy was this study
In the cold nights of the winter,
When, outside, the winds were howling,
And the heavy snow-flakes falling.
Then, with shades dropped o'er the windows,
Would the parson and his family
Gather round the fire, made brighter
By the blowing of the north wind,

And rejoice that they were sheltered.
One last room had this good parsonage,
Cool and roomy, large and pleasant,
One in which old father Jacob
Might have sheltered his twelve children,
And still walked, himself, with Rachel.
This room was the summer parlor,
One too cool for winter using,
But a joy in June or August.
Here, long afternoons, when all things
Drooped beneath the heats of summer,
On still evenings, when the moonlight
Streamed in through the eastern window,
Sat the parson with his family.
If the furniture was rusty
In the pleasant summer parlor,
Was it not the same, the parson
Purchased for his bride's home-coming,
Five and twenty years beforehand?
Two good sofas, both of horse-hair,
And one arm-chair of the same stuff,
Two small tables, a low rocker,
And two large well-filled book shelves.
What more needed this good parson?
One thing more, a small melodeon,
A gift to our Ruth in childhood,
Made this summer parlor royal.
Still, in every pot of ointment
Sticks a fly, the proverb tells us.
Paul and Ruth were not excepted.
Theirs was in the summer parlor,
'Twas the shades over the windows.
"O, it is not" cried the mother
"That they are so very homely,
But their red and bloody color
Makes me think of war's commotions.
Let us change them; they bring discord

To my very Sunday's quiet".
So 'twas settled, and the parson,
With his wife to help him choose them,
Started to the town for curtains.
"Not too gay must be these hangings",
Cried the good wife to her husband,
"Lest with worldly thoughts and feelings
We may lead our people wrongly".
"No", replied the worthy parson,
"Yet all good things have been given
Unto us for our enjoyment.
Choose we something grave and cheerful,
That shall rest our eyes and others".
So 'twas done. They bought the curtains.
They were made by the good mother,
Helped by Dorcas and by Martha.
Then Saint Paul and young Timotheus
Hung the comforts in their places.
Now they hang there. "Yet", cried Martha,
"Moths will soon eat up the curtains.
Let me make their hanging lasting".

So she manufactured verses
Telling of the busy hanging.
Where the verses are I know not.
They were lost the day she made them.

THE PASQUE FLOWER

A tiny bell,—but hush! bend down thine ear,
Dost catch its golden music, softly ringing?
Far, far away it sounds, yet sweet and clear,
The obligato to spring's chorus singing.

The tiny bell must droop, its brief day past.
Yet, if thine ear hath heard but once its measure,
Forever in thy heart its tone will last,
The spring's sad, joyous song, a living treasure.

AN EASTER SONG

The silent winter is dreary and sad.
And the patient earth waits long.
Where is the spring, with its promise glad?
O, the power of death is strong!
Strong is evil, and strong is pain.
Must pain and evil always reign?

Through the frozen earth springs a tiny blade.
The voiceless silence is past.
Life against death hath its powers arrayed.
And Easter has come at last.
The lent lilies ring their golden bells,
And this is the message their music tells.
Free! free! free!
The strong is o'erthrown by a stronger than he.
Evil is vanquished, strong death is slain.
He who died now liveth, forever to reign.
O, rescued earth, your praises bring!
O, happy bells, most sweetly ring!
Free! free! free!
Let us, too, sing.
Our glorious King,
Hath conquered for you and me.

TO MY MOTHER

The skies hang gray and chilly, and the wintry winds
still blow,
While over the hills and moorlands, drift softly
stray flakes of snow.

Yet in spite of leafless branches, and meadows
brown and bare,
There's a hint of spring on hill-slopes, and a hope
of spring in the air.

There are furrows upon thy cheek, Love, and lines
on thy broad brow fair,
And the snows of many winters lie soft 'mid thy
golden hair.

Yet, over thy peaceful face, Love, and deep in thy
clear, calm eyes,
Shines a light that is brighter and sweeter than e'er
shone in springtime skies.

For thy face is set towards the dawn-land, where
is known no winter's decay,
And thy path shall grow brighter and brighter, till
it endeth in perfect day.

UNITED

We are not far from those we love,
At Christmas tide,
Though we walk here 'mid shades of earth,
They, with the glorified.
For He, who came, a little child, to bring us life.
Walks near to us who struggle here amid earth's strife,
And near to them who now rejoice, all suffering past.
And, kept by Him, we all shall meet, safe home at last.

AT FORTY

It is not the girl of twenty,
  Nor the girl of twenty-nine,
No, nor yet the girl of thirty,
  Whose charms most brightly shine.
But 'tis she who keeps her freshness,
  Hope, and faith, and temper fair,
When the snows of forty winters
  Show their traces on her hair.

She may not be a beauty;
  Maids at forty seldom are.
You can't call her brow a lily,
  Nor her eye a gleaming star.
But, if spring-time tints have vanished,
  And her brow with thought is lined,
'Tis the sculptor, Time's own witness,
  To a spirit, strong and kind.

She is not as good at tennis
  As—well, twenty years ago.
And the young folk, though they love her,
  Find her stories "rather slow."
And she knows it; yet, serenely,
  With a courage high and grand,
Steadfast treads the path appointed,
  Rules her own lone spirit-land.

In her lips, the law of kindness
  Ever holds supreme control.
Truth her inmost thought has lighted,
  Faith and hope have filled her soul.
And, "not slothful," still, in action,
  Be the deed so great or small,
Every task she makes a pleasure,
  Eager-hearted service, all.

Does she dream, as other women,
Of the woman's kingdom sweet?
Ay, she dreams, for, without dreaming,
Any life is incomplete.
And she sees, away in cloudland,—
Ah! but this I cannot show,
For a woman's inmost fancies,
Stranger eyes may never know.

But she comes again, serenely,
To this world of every day,
And is glad of work, or pleasure,
Song of birds, or children's play.
So we need not give her pity,
For her spring-time, far away,
She is facing now the sunrise,
Rising to the perfect day.

THE TEACHER'S WARRANT

"Let him that heareth say, Come"

How can I guide these little eager feet,
When mine so oft have wandered from Thy way?
How can I dare Thy wondrous truth repeat
With lips so stained by sin, from day to day?
Yet, Lord, I heard Thy loving voice say "Come";
And, having heard, how can I choose but tell
Of Him whose tender heart holds ample room
For me, and for these little ones I love so well?
I have no wisdom. Thine is all complete,
And Thou dost bid the needy come to thee.
I come, and bring these children to Thy feet.
Receive and bless them, Lord. Teach them—and me.

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